

The Sacraments

There are seven sacraments in the Catholic Church. The sacraments each are given to us by Christ, have a visible sign, and give God's grace to the recipient. Children are typically baptized as infants. Now with the Archbishop's restored order, confession, confirmation and first communion will typically happen around third grade. In each of the sacraments, there is an outward sign present, and they are:

Baptism: water being poured

Confession: priest says "I absolve you of your sins"

Confirmation: anointing of forehead with chrism oil

Communion: the bread and the wine becomes Jesus in the Eucharist

Marriage: the rings and the vows said over them

Holy Orders: anointing of the hands by chrism oil and laying of hands along with the words spoken by the Archbishop

Anointing of the Sick: priest lays his hands on the sick and anoints the forehead and hands

The Sacraments of Initiation: The Foundation of Christian Life

Baptism

Many of us are familiar with Baptism as a rite of passage for babies. In fact, anyone can prepare for Baptism. Catholics learn that Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptist, and instead of being cleansed (as He was free from sin), He cleansed the waters. Jesus was baptized in solidarity with humans and commanded His disciples to baptize all nations and free humans from original and actual sin. Original sin is the innate tendency in all humans, inherited from Adam and Eve, to turn away from God and make poor choices. Baptism is our first call to holiness, an opportunity to trust in the Lord.

Confirmation

Confirmation builds on the foundation of baptism, and asks Catholics to be conscious, active, living and breathing participants in the full faith life of the Church through openness to the Holy Spirit. Confirmation charges Catholics with the real world challenge of bringing Christ into our families, neighborhoods, and communities.

The Eucharist

The Eucharist is the completion of the Sacraments of Initiation. It is also known as Communion, and literally means “thanksgiving.” It is the nourishment needed to move through the world and bear witness to His light and truth; an on-going initiation that keeps our faith new and alive. The Eucharist is also a deep mystery - we believe that the bread and wine has undergone transubstantiation and is literally the body and blood of Christ. This is a summary sacrament - it is what it means to be the church - the body and blood of Christ. Adoration is when the Eucharist - also known as the Blessed Sacrament - is exposed; during this time we literally sit in that mystery, that beauty, that light, and pray, sing, read, take it in.

The Sacraments of Healing

Penance

Also known as Reconciliation or referred to as Confession, Penance is a gift from God to us to both allow a space for the forgiveness of sins and help us become more merciful toward others. Penance is the chance to bring our sins to God and ask for forgiveness, which He always gives. Catholics are encouraged to examine their conscious prior to confessing, so that they are prepared; part of confession includes an Act of Contrition. Confessions can be anonymous or face-to-face or side-by-side a priest, and typically includes a penance - or post-confession task to complete (that is typically prayers but could be something specific, like, “Do one truly generous thing for your husband this week.”). Catholics are encouraged to confess often, as doing so brings one back into a state of grace - or in other words, a healthy place with God.

Anointing of the Sick

Jesus was a healer! Is a healer! Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament bestowed by a priest with the intended effect of spiritual healing. The intention, as well, is spiritual healing by which the sick person receives the Holy Spirit's gift of peace and courage to deal with the difficulties that accompany serious illness or the frailty of old age or to endure.

The Sacraments at the Service of Communion

Matrimony

The Sacrament of Marriage is a covenant, which is more than a contract, and it is meant to mirror the spousal relationship Jesus has with the Church, His bride. Covenant always expresses a relationship between persons. The marriage covenant refers to the relationship between the husband and wife, a permanent union of persons capable of knowing and loving each other and

God. The celebration of marriage is also a liturgical act, appropriately held in a public liturgy at church.

Holy Orders

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit and established by God as our high priest. While all share in Christ's priesthood, the ministerial priesthood shares this through the Sacrament of Holy Orders in a special way. Ordination to the priesthood is always a call and a gift from God. Christ reminded his Apostles that they needed to ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the harvest. Those who seek priesthood respond generously to God's call using the words of the prophet, "Here I am, send me" (Is 6:8).

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/index.cfm>